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# EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

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## A FIVE YEAR PLAN OF ACTION

1985 - 89

## FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1990



## Minister's Message

I am pleased to present the Final Report on the *Five Year Action Plan on Equality for Women*. The plan was originally released in 1985, as part of our government's involvement in the activities marking the end of the U.N. Decade for Women.

During the five years since then, the action plan has provided both a general framework and specific commitments which have guided our progress towards achieving equality for women. Several very significant initiatives have been undertaken during this period. Highlights include our Interim Child Care Program; Family Law Review; the legal guarantee of maternity leave; our Affirmative Action Policy; the start-up of an Early Childhood Education Program at Arctic College; the completion of the School Health Curriculum; our Literacy Strategy; research on pay equity and women in non-traditional trades and the completion of our three year action plan on spousal assault.

This progress has been achieved through co-operation with women's organizations and community groups, as well as positive responses from the various departments involved. The role of the Women's Directorate has been key in monitoring progress and assisting departments.

This government's commitment to women's equality will continue, and many of the initiatives begun under this action plan are ongoing. We welcome continued co-operation and comments from concerned groups and individuals.

  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

October 1990

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October 1990

# **INTEGRATING STATUS OF WOMEN CONCERNS INTO GNWT PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

## **1. Policy on Equality of Women and Men in NWT**

*To develop a policy and directive as a departmental guideline for promoting equality of men and women by GNWT.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Women's Secretariat in consultation with departments.

### **Accomplishments**

This policy was approved in 1985 at the same time as the Five Year Action Plan on Equality for Women. The Women's Secretariat has encouraged departments to implement action items. Reports on progress to 1987, 1988 and 1989 were tabled in the Legislative Assembly. This final report marks the completion of the requirements relating to the action plan.

## **2. Executive Documents to Include Implications on Status of Women**

*Departments and other GNWT agencies to be required to include in Executive discussion and decision papers a section on Implications for the Status of Women.*

#### 4. Resources of Women's Secretariat

*To examine resources of Women's Secretariat to meet objectives adequately.*

##### **Responsibility Centre**

Women's Secretariat

##### **Accomplishments**

In 1987, the staff resources of the Women's Secretariat were increased to five permanent positions. These were Executive Director, Executive Secretary, Research Analyst, Community Worker and Administrative Clerk. This staff also provided clerical, research, and administrative services to the *NWT Advisory Council on the Status of Women*.

In 1988, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women commissioned a review of the roles and relationships between the Secretariat and the Advisory Council. In 1989, she announced the government's intention to restructure their operations and to create a more independent Council with the ability and resources to hire its own staff and set its own priorities. A draft piece of legislation called the *Status of Women Council Act* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in 1989.

In April 1990, the Act was passed and proclaimed. A new Council was appointed and a contribution agreement signed giving the Council direct control of its own staffing and spending. As a result of the decreased workload regarding Council matters, the Secretariat staff was reduced to three: Executive Director, Research Analyst and Executive Secretary. It has been re-named the Women's Directorate and is now a primarily internal agency responsible for working with government departments to identify and address issues impacting women.

The rest of the National Strategy on Child Care was never implemented due to the federal election in 1988. There is a federal commitment to develop a new strategy by 1993. It is not clear whether it will include further tax changes.

A 1989 court decision in southern Canada allowing a self-employed woman to deduct the full cost of her nanny as an employment expense may have set a precedent. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women has continued to raise this concern with her federal counterpart.

## **6. Vocational Training Equal Opportunity**

*To ensure vocational courses at Thebacha College provide equal training opportunities for women and men by actively recruiting women for training in non-traditional occupations and new technical fields, and by offering courses in which women have a traditional interest.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Education

### **Accomplishments**

Arctic College has highlighted the participation of women in non-traditional occupations in its public relations material and course calendars. "Enrolment in non-traditional trades training (carpentry, welding, heavy equipment operation, electrical, housing maintenance and mechanics) was 4 women and 450 men in 1987/88, and 2 women and 207 men in 1988/89, and 15 women and 221 men in 1989/90".

## **Accomplishments**

Internal pay equity has been routinely reviewed during the development of new or revised classification standards. Progress on initiatives in other provinces has also been monitored.

In 1989, a Letter of Understanding was negotiated with the Government employees' union (Union of Northern Workers) at the same time as the Collective Agreement. It recognizes and supports the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and agrees to consider such action as may be necessary to implement it for Government of the Northwest Territories employees covered by the agreement. Such action will be based on the principle that wages shall be based solely on work value as determined by a composite of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

Following the Letter of Understanding, a Joint Equal Pay Study has been started. The terms of reference have been agreed to and a consulting company began its work in April 1990. The study is expected to take approximately a year and a half.

### **8. Personal Harassment Procedure**

*To develop a personal harassment procedure for the GNWT.*

#### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Personnel

#### **Accomplishments**

A policy on Sexual Harassment was approved and implemented in 1987.

## **11. Part-Time Work Benefits**

*To develop a consistent approach to benefits for part-time employees in GNWT ensuring benefits are equivalent to pro-rated benefits of full-time employees where possible.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Personnel

### **Accomplishments**

All benefits over which the Government of the NWT has control are now fully pro-rated based on hours worked for part-time employees.

## **12. Promotion Campaign to Encourage Women to Start Small Businesses**

*To launch a promotional campaign to improve the representation of women as owners of private businesses.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Women's Secretariat

### **Accomplishments**

Conferences to promote and assist women in business were held in 1987, 1988 and 1989. They were organized jointly by the Women's Secretariat, Federal Business Development Bank, Economic Development and Tourism, and several community groups and were promoted as part of "Small Business Week" each year in October. Travel funds were obtained to enable women from across the NWT to participate.



## **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Justice

### **Accomplishments**

The issue was reviewed at the time that the changes involving maternity leave were proposed. In 1989, the Labour Law Standards Review Panel was set up to review current labour law and make recommendations. Parental leave was one of the issues reviewed by the panel. The panel report is being reviewed by the Department.

Responsibility for this matter was transferred to the new Department of Safety and Public Services in 1989.

## **15. Domestic Labour Protection**

*To review labour legislation to consider inclusion of protection of domestic labour in the context of NWT circumstances.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Justice

### **Accomplishments**

In 1988, the Labour Standards Act was amended to entitle domestic workers to provisions such as vacation pay and termination notice.

Responsibility for this item was transferred to the new Department of Safety and Public Services in 1989.

In the absence of a cost-sharing arrangement, the GNWT provided emergency funding in 1988 to assist existing centres to meet the licensing requirements under the Regulations. An *Interim Child Care Program* was announced for the 1989/90 fiscal year. It provides start-up and operating grants to licensed non-profit centres and day homes. It also provides a user subsidy to parents who qualify based on an income test. The total budget allocation in 1989/90 was \$2.1 million. The GNWT continued to express its concern about the delay in cost-sharing negotiations to the federal government.

The Interim Program has continued into the 1990/91 fiscal year at the same funding level. It has directly contributed to the creation of 300 new licensed child care spaces. Emphasis is now being placed on licensing family day home operators, on policy development, and on assessing the Interim Program and its effectiveness, pending the announcement of the promised Federal initiatives in this area.

## **17. Affirmative Action for Women in GNWT**

*To develop an affirmative action program for women with emphasis on their participation at higher, decision-making levels and in non-traditional occupations. The program should include hiring, training and promotion components.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Equal Employment Directorate

## 19. Child Care Training Program

*To develop a child care workers program through Arctic College for field delivery.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Education in consultation with Department of Social Services, CEIC, and Women's Secretariat

### **Accomplishments**

An Two-Year Early Childhood Education program to train workers for child day care facilities has been developed by Arctic College. It was first delivered in 1988/89 at the Nunatta Campus in Iqaluit. In 1989/90, both the first and second years were offered at Iqaluit; the first year was offered at Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith; and courses were offered in Yellowknife on an evening basis. Work on modules for community-based delivery is underway and these have been successfully delivered in several communities in the Eastern Arctic.

## 20. Secretarial Arts as a Trade

*To consider the designation of secretarial arts as a trade.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Trades Qualification Board; Minister of Education

"Labour demand projections are very difficult. The Departments of Economic Development and Education are developing a proposal with the Bureau of Statistics to carry out a labour demand survey as part of the overall economic development strategy."

Explanation: There has only been one discussion on the topic of a labour demand survey and it would be treated as one funding item in the Economic Development Agreement with the federal government. Also, the last sentence referring to the NWT Business Directory has been removed because it has not been updated well over the last few years, and the information contained in it would not be reliable enough to use in a labour demand survey.

## **22. Native Language Bonuses**

*To examine providing a special language bonus to employees with fluency in a native language.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Personnel

### **Accomplishments**

The Department of Personnel conducted an employee survey in 1986 to gather information about the use of native languages in the workplace. The Collective Agreement signed in 1989 provides for a bilingual bonus recognizing fluency in French or one of seven aboriginal languages. An employee, other than a translator, who is required to use two or more languages will receive a bonus of \$1200 per year. This bonus is now in place and is being paid to employees who qualify.

## **Accomplishments**

In 1987/88, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism began a process of developing regional arts and crafts strategies leading to a territorial strategy. The needs expressed by people involved in arts and crafts, including the social and cultural values involved, were taken into account. Other departments and interest groups were also consulted.

In 1989, a new economic strategy was announced, in part as a response to the report of the Special Committee on the Northern Economy. It included a segment on arts and crafts development. By August 1989, the framework for the proposed territorial arts and crafts strategy was completed.

Over the last five years, various programs of the Department have provided assistance to co-operatives and small businesses involved in arts and crafts. Examples include the Holman Eskimo Co-operative, Styles North in Inuvik, the Match Box Gallery in Rankin Inlet, Traditions Craft Shop in Fort Simpson and the Pangnirtung Weaving Shop.

The Arts and Crafts Subsidy of the Federal-Territorial Economic Development Agreement (EDA) has also provided assistance to projects benefiting and involving women. These projects comprised 14% of the total EDA budget in 1988/89 and 18% in 1989/90. They included activities such as sewing material distribution, locally-delivered training courses through Arctic College, Workshops on skill and product development and management, and assistance with exhibits and promotion. Both individuals and organizations have received assistance.

In 1988, the NWT Advisory Council on the Status of Women, with funding from the Women's Secretariat, conducted research on women in the Arts and Crafts Sector. Their report, entitled "Arts and Crafts: Women and Their Work" has been widely distributed.

## 26. Math & Science Emphasis

*To direct the Department of Education to promote teaching methods and expectations which encourage girls to obtain the necessary pre-requisites in math and science for careers in technological and non-traditional occupations.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Education

### **Accomplishments**

The science program in NWT schools is based largely on the Science Council of Canada's recommendations to promote "science for every student". The program content and texts have been carefully selected. Information addressing the fair representation of women in these fields, including "Checklist for Teaching Strategies for Encouraging Females in Math and Science Classes", has been distributed to schools. New textbooks and revisions to the math and science programs reflect more awareness regarding stereotyping and careers.

Math and science are mandatory for all students in elementary and junior high grades. Requirements for high school graduation have been increased to eight science and eight math credits for a general diploma, and eleven science and fifteen math credits for an advanced diploma.

There is now an equal distribution of males and females in mathematics, biology and chemistry courses at all levels. There is a low proportion of females (25%) enrolled in physics. This latter is expected to improve as more females participate in math courses.

The new Career and Life Management (CALM) course is now mandatory for all high school students. It has modules which depict women in positive roles.

## **28. Higher Education Courses**

*Increased availability of government co-ordinated higher education courses in communities.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Education

### **Accomplishments**

Arctic College has expanded from one to six campuses. It now offers post-secondary courses and programs at campuses in Inuvik, Iqaluit, Fort Smith, Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet and Yellowknife. Day care services are offered on-campus at Fort Smith and Iqaluit.

The NWT Student Financial Assistance Program has been amended to increase financial support including day care, and to cover costs of correspondence courses.

The Family and Children's Services within the Department of Social Services does cover some day care costs for full time students with no income. This program works jointly with the N.W.T. Student Financial Assistance Program.

First year university courses have been offered since 1988 and enrolment has steadily increased. Part-time studies are particularly popular.

## **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Education

### **Accomplishments**

"Adult Basic Education and literacy classes are provided in more than 30 NWT communities. Arctic College has identified literacy and adult basic education programs as a priority in its 1990-95 Strategic Plan. In 1989-90 the College provided over \$2.7 million for the delivery of adult basic education programs alone. Transfer of the responsibility for delivering adult education to Arctic College was completed in 1990.

A five year literacy strategy, covering the period 1988-89 to 1992-93, has been implemented providing approximately \$560,000 additional funds annually during this time period for literacy programs. The strategy includes a promotional campaign and a \$250,000 fund for community literacy projects. In 1989-90 14 projects were funded in communities across the NWT and in 1990-91 11 projects were funded. These projects addressed both English and aboriginal language literacy, and two focused specifically on young mothers at home with children. In addition a project focusing on women and literacy was jointly funded with the Women's Secretariat. Celebrations have been organized around International Literacy Day and International Literacy Year in 1990. The Circumpolar Literacy Conference was hosted by the NWT and held in Yellowknife in 1990."

In 1989, with support from the Department of Education, an Interim NWT Literacy Council was formed. In 1990, it became a permanent Council and began distributing funds to community literacy projects.



***(2) Assisting groups to identify community resource people who can assist in completing requirements for incorporating as a society to receive funding.***

## **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Health; GNWT offices in communities

## **Accomplishments**

The Department of Health has worked with the Department of Education and the Women's Secretariat to assist and promote community health committees and women's groups. Emphasis has been put on the "popular education model," which has proven especially useful on working with self help groups for women who are victims of spousal assault. It places the responsibility on the local group to work towards a better understanding of the issue and to come up with community-based solutions.

Following the transfer of responsibility from the federal government in 1988, renewed emphasis has been put on developing community health committees.

The Dr. Otto Shaefer Health Resource Centre distributes self help resource materials and information, including audio visual materials, on women's health issues.

### **33. Encourage Communities to Regulate Pornography**

***To encourage communities and residents to use moral suasion in requesting retailers of pornographic materials which violate community standards to cease. Where moral suasion fails, municipalities should be encouraged to establish by-laws under the appropriate section of the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to regulate display of***

## **Accomplishments**

In 1985, the federal Fraser Commission made recommendations regarding the regulation of pornography. Amendments to the Criminal Code were proposed, as Bill C-54, by the federal government. These amendments would have added definitions of "pornography", "erotica" and "degrading acts" to the Criminal Code. It also created several new offenses related to pornography and added "sex" to the list of prohibited grounds for hate literature. This bill did not get passed by Parliament. In 1989, the Justice Minister announced the federal government's intention to move to regulate child pornography and images of sexual violence.

Section 122 of the Cities, Towns and Villages Act as described in #38 Regulations of Videos (p. 30) may also be used to help to regulate pornography.

### **35. Nutrition and Pregnant Women**

*To request Medical Services Branch to place high priority for research on the state of nutrition of pregnant women in the NWT with a view to making recommendations and implementing ways and means of improving the nutritional status of pregnant women.*

#### **Responsibility Centre**

Minister Responsible for Health

#### **Accomplishments**

The Department of Health and Health and Welfare Canada provided funding for a series of videos on nutrition to the NWT Native Women's Association in 1987. The series included information on infant and pre-natal nutrition. Pamphlets on pregnancy, teen

## **Accomplishments**

The NWT participated in the National Health Promotion Survey in 1985. It included information on attitudes and behaviours of women in relation to health issues such as stress levels coping skills, nutritional knowledge, personal rating of happiness and physical health improvement skills.

With the transfer of responsibility for health to the GNWT in 1988, funding of regular health promotion programs and services became the responsibility of the Department of Health and Regional Health Boards. The exception is territorial-wide health promotion studies which are still a federal responsibility.

Health Promotion Studies on "HIV Infections and Youth" and "Tobacco Use Amongst School Children in NWT" were released in 1989, along with the results of the NWT Health Promotion Survey. The University of Manitoba is currently conducting a study on the impact of birthing outside the NWT on families.

Discussions are underway with the federal government regarding the feasibility of conducting a territorial-wide health status survey in 1992.

### **37. New School Health Curriculum Introduced**

*To introduce the health curriculum currently under development into NWT schools. The curriculum covers all areas of health education including mental and emotional well-being, alcohol and drug abuse, family life education, and family planning.*

#### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Education with support of the Department of Health

## **Accomplishments**

In 1987, the new *Cities, Towns and Villages Act* was passed. It gives authority to municipalities to pass by-laws to regulate the sale and distribution of obscene material. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs distributed the new Act to community councils and offered workshops on implementing it. It is now the responsibility of individual communities to pass by-laws if they chose to do so.

The federal government has not yet passed new legislation to regulate pornography. See #34 Lobby Against Pornography in the Media. (p. 27)

### **39. Industrial Health and Safety Regulations**

*To revise Industrial Health and Safety Regulations in order to improve workers' effective right to know what substances they are being exposed to and how to protect themselves:*

*(1) Requiring employers to have information at work sites on hazards in the workplace.*

*(2) Improved labelling of potentially toxic substances.*

*(3) Education on rights of workers to refuse to do dangerous work and protective measures to reduce levels of exposure.*

## **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Justice

legal professions. Progress reports were tabled in the Legislative Assembly and a final report was tabled in 1989. The mandate of the Ministerial Committee ended with the end of "Choices..." in 1989.

The action plan has assisted considerably in the improvement of the Government's response to spousal assault. The Family Violence Prevention Program in Social Services funds eight shelters, three "second-stage" housing programs and two counselling services as well as a variety of training and community awareness initiatives. Public education materials including posters, pamphlets, a newsletter and videos have been developed. The School Health Curriculum has a Family Life Unit which includes the issue of family violence.

Since the end of the action plan, the Women's Secretariat has continued to monitor and facilitate activities in this area. Related issues such as child sexual abuse have also been recognized and addressed. Activities underway include participation in inter-agency co-ordination, research on victims' needs and participation, and funding of training sessions for professionals in the criminal justice system.

#### **41. Mental Health Program Evaluation**

*To conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of mental health delivery services in the NWT and make recommendations on:*

- (1) Appropriate roles of professional, para-professional and other community resources including self-help groups.*
- (2) Procedure for providing service delivery.*
- (3) Training requirements.*

The Department of Health provides some related services through the Family Life Education Program and other health promotion activities. In particular, "popular education" style workshops on self-help, suicide, and women's issues continue to be provided.

## 42. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment and Prevention

*To undertake research into the special needs of women in alcohol and drug abuse and develop awareness and rehabilitation programs to meet these needs.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Social Services

### **Accomplishments**

A kit entitled "*It's Just Your Nerves Eh?...*" was developed jointly with the NWT Native Women's Association. It is aimed specifically at women and has been re-produced and distributed several times. It has been used as a basis for workshops with women's groups and for training sessions.

Training has also been provided to staff of women's shelters. Community-based alcohol workers have been receiving training from the Nechi Institute, which contains a module on family violence.

Funding was provided to the NWT Advisory Council on the Status of Women for a workshop in 1988 on personal skills development for women. It was held in Rankin Inlet and women from across the NWT attended. Alcohol and drug abuse were among the range of women's concerns discussed.

In conjunction with the Department of Culture and Communications, two booklets entitled "Women and Alcohol" and "Women Moving Up" have been produced and distributed.

## **WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE**

### **44. Appointment of Women to Boards**

*Appoint women to public boards when vacancies occur to ensure women are more equitably represented. Reasonable balance of men and women on each board should be considered as well as considering women for chairperson positions.  
and*

### **45. Talent Bank of NWT Women**

*Establish a Talent Bank of NWT women and their skills and experience to identify qualified women for appointments to Boards.*

### **Responsibility Centre**

All Ministers of Executive Council, Women's Secretariat

### **Accomplishments**

A Talent Bank of women interested in serving on public boards was established in the Women's Secretariat in 1986. It contains over 100 names of women from all regions. It has been advertised and updated several times. Departments and Ministers have been made aware of the Talent Bank, and women's names are referred to them upon request.

The percentage of women on public boards and councils continues to vary between 24-28%.

## **Accomplishments**

In 1987, the DIZ group program was reviewed and was continued on a smaller scale. Since then, only two groups have been active. They are in the Beaufort-Mackenzie Delta DIZ and Shihta Regional Council DIZ Committee.

Communities elect their own representative to the DIZ Groups. At March 1990, there were no women on the Beaufort-Mackenzie Delta DIZ group and one on the Shihta Regional Council DIZ Committee.

### **48. Women in Policy and Decision-Making in the Public Service**

*Include in an affirmative action program for women, representation at all policy and decision-making levels, particularly in priority areas of education, health, and employment.*

## **Responsibility Centre**

Equal Employment Directorate

## **Accomplishments**

An *Affirmative Action Policy* was announced in March 1989. It includes women with one year's residency in the NWT as a target group. Instructions on the implementation of the policy have been issued to departments. They state that target group women aspiring to management positions will receive priority for employment, training or promotional opportunities.



## **Accomplishments**

Concerns about legislative language arising from the coming into effect of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms were addressed by a series of wording amendments in 1986. A comprehensive revision of all legislation and regulations to remove sexist language was begun in 1987. It is expected to be complete in 1991.

### **51. Equality Audit Amendments to Legislation**

*To introduce legislation to comply with equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as soon as possible.*

#### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Justice; Designated Departments

## **Accomplishments**

Two pieces of legislation concerned with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms were passed in 1986 and 1987. This completed NWT conformation with the provisions of the Charter.

### **52. Family Law Revisions**

*To make recommendations for changes in legislation to simplify family law and to reflect marriage as an equal partnership, both social and economic.*

#### **Responsibility Centre**

Department of Justice